

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE OPENING

OF THE

PARISH-CHURCH OF CLAPHAM,

IN THE COUNTY OF SURRY,

ON SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 1776.

S. E. R. M. O. M.

THIS BOOK AT THE OPENING

of the

PARISH-CHURCH OF CLAREMONT

IN THE COUNTY OF TARRANT

ON SUNDAY JUNE 2 1850

1026. f. 7. 5

THE ORIGIN OF CONSECRATED CHURCHES,
AND THE BENEFITS OF PUBLIC WORSHIP:

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE OPENING
OF THE
PARISH-CHURCH OF CLAPHAM,
IN THE COUNTY OF SURRY,
ON SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 1776.

BY SAMUEL GLASSE, D.D. F.R.S.
AND CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY.

AND PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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AND J. FLETCHER, OXFORD.

MDCCLXXVI.

THE CHURCH OF CHRISTIANITY
AND THE BAPTIST CHURCH

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE OPENING

OF THE

PARISH CHURCH OF CLAPHAM

IN THE COUNTY OF SURREY

ON SUNDAY, JUNE 3, 1870

BY SAMUEL GLASSE, D.D., F.R.S.

AND CANTON IN ORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY

AND PUBLISHED BY ROUTLEDGE

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WORTHINGTON

TO
THE VERY WORTHY AND RESPECTABLE
MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE
APPOINTED TO DIRECT THE BUILDING
OF THE
PARISH-CHURCH OF CLAPHAM,
AND TO
THE GENEROUS CONTRIBUTORS
TOWARDS THE SAME;

THE FOLLOWING
DISCOURSE
IS INSCRIBED,

WITH THE UTMOST RESPECT,

BY

THEIR MOST OBLIGED, AND

GREENFORD,
JUNE 14, 1776.

MOST HUMBLE SERVANT,

SAMUEL GLASSE.

THE VERY WORTHY AND RESPECTABLE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

APPOINTED TO DIRECT THE BUILDING

OF THE

PARISH-CHURCH OF CLAPHAM,

AND TO

THE GENEROUS CONTRIBUTORS

TOWARDS THE SAME.

THE FOLLOWING

D I S C O U R S E

IS INCORPORATED,

WITH THE MOST RECENT

BY

THEIR MOST OBLIGED AND

MOST HUMBLE SERVANTS

ASSISTED,

JOHN H. H. H.

SAMUEL GLASS

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE Writer of the following Pages is aware, that it may be objected to what is here insisted on, that too much Stress is laid on external Observances, and too little is said to recommend an uniform Holiness in our moral Conduct. He begs Leave to declare, that he thinks it utterly impossible to separate, in the Character of a *truly* religious Person, an holy Communion with GOD, from an holy Conformity to the Precepts and Example of JESUS CHRIST. One cannot long subsist without the other; each being as essential to our spiritual Welfare, as the Breath is to the Continuance of Life and Motion. The one therefore ought certainly to be observed, while the other is by no Means to be neglected.

THE Author's Prayer for all who call themselves Christians is, that they may hold the Faith *in Unity of Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, and in Righteousness of Life.*

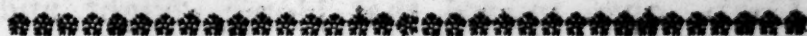
ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Writer of the following Tracts is aware, that it may be expected to what is here submitted, that two months ago, he had an original Oration, and two others, and to recommend to various Honours, in the same Contest. He begs leave to declare, that he thinks it nearly impossible to separate, in the Character of a very religious Society, an holy Communion with God, from an holy Communion with the Father and Son, and the Holy Spirit. One cannot long believe without the other; each being as essential to the spiritual Welfare, as the other is to the Continuance of Life and Motion. The one therefore ought certainly to be observed, while the other is by no means to be neglected.

The Author's Request, for all who call themselves Christians is, that they may hold the Faith in Unity of Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, and in the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit.



A
S E R M O N.



EXODUS, CHAP. XX. VER. 24.

—IN ALL PLACES WHERE I RECORD MY
NAME, I WILL COME UNTO THEE, AND
I WILL BLESS THEE.

THERE is something exceedingly
gracious and affecting in the Pro-
mise here made by G O D to his
Servant *Moses*, and repeatedly con-
firmed to his faithful Worshipers on other
Occasions, in Holy Scripture. That G O D
should vouchsafe to come unto Man to bless
him, is such an Instance of Condescension, as,
while it excites the Wonder of Angels, must

B needs

needs kindle in the Hearts of Men, the warmest Sentiments of Gratitude and Love. May we not then ask, with *Solomon*, not in the Language of Infidelity, but of holy Admiration, *Will G O D indeed dwell on the Earth? Behold! the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Thee:* How much less this House, in which Thy Name is recorded? Yet are thine Eyes, O LORD, open toward that House, Night and Day, of which thou hast said, My Name shall be there; For the Truth of thy Promise abideth for ever: In all Places where I record my Name, whether it be the Ark of the Covenant, the Altar, or the Temple; whatsoever Places are lawfully and properly consecrated in my Name, in them will I meet thee; to hear thy Prayers, to grant thee thy Requests, and to give thee some gracious Testimony of my Presence with thee.

THE Words before us will not be esteemed unsuitable to the present Occasion, if they lead us to consider in what a peculiar Manner the Favor and Blessing of G O D have been in all Ages vouchsafed to the Places dedicated to his Honor

Honor and Service. In doing which, we cannot but take Notice of the repeated Assurances given us in Holy Scripture, that the *Public* Worship of GOD is particularly distinguished with the Tokens of His Approbation, and the Presence of His Holy Spirit.

IN the 28th Chapter of the Book of *Genesis*, we read, that the Patriarch *Jacob* having fled from the Face of his Brother *Esau*, was on his Journey to *Padan-Aram*, when a very extraordinary Vision was vouchsafed to him by the Way: *He dreamed, and behold! a Ladder set upon the Earth; and the Top of it reached to Heaven; and behold, the Angels of GOD ascending and descending on it.* The Design of this Vision was not only to convince him of GOD's perpetual Care of His Servants by Means of these *ministring Spirits*; but also to confirm the Promises made to *Abraham* and *Isaac*; that in him and in his Seed, which the Apostle hath interpreted, CHRIST JESUS, should center all His Promises of Mercy to Mankind. *In Thee and in thy Seed, shall all the Families of the Earth be blessed.*

IMPRESSED with an awful Sense of this Divine Manifestation, he awaked out of his Sleep, and said, *Surely the LORD is in this Place, and I knew it not; and he was afraid and said: How fearful is this Place! This is none other, but the House of GOD; and this is the Gate of Heaven:*

“ However distant from my native Country,
 “ however sequestered, for the present, from
 “ the Converse of Men, GOD hath been pleased
 “ to comfort my Soul with a gracious Manifestation of His Presence with me, and with
 “ a Confirmation of His Promise to my Fore-
 “ fathers.” Therefore he called the Name of that Place *Beth-El*, the *House of GOD*: Nor does he proceed on his Journey, till he hath strictly engaged himself to build there an Altar to the GOD of *Bethel*, whenever he should return to his Father’s House in Peace. This is the first Account which we meet with in the Holy Scripture of any solemn Consecration of a particular Place to GOD’s Honor and Service; for *the Stone* on which his Head was reclined, *when he beheld the Vision*, was set up for a Pillar, and the Top of it anointed with Oil.

That

That this Act of Piety was accepted and approved of God, we have undoubted Assurance in the 31st Chapter of the same Book; where GOD, appearing again to *Jacob*, reminds him of the Consecration at *Bethel*, and the Vows he had there made: *I am the GOD of Bethel*, says He, *where thou anointedst the Pillar, and where thou vowedst a Vow unto me.*

I MIGHT easily tire you with a Recital of Instances, from the *Jewish* Law, of God's especial Regard to the Places dedicated to the Purposes of Religion. In *one* Chapter only *, the Commandment is five Times repeated, that they should not eat their Sacrifices nor offer their Burnt-offerings in every Place, but in the Place which the LORD should choose, to cause His Name to dwell there; even thither were they required to resort, and there were they to do all that He commanded them. The Passover also was not allowed to be sacrificed within any of their Gates, but in the Place which the LORD should choose to place His Name in. To some,

* Deut. xii.

perhaps,

perhaps, this may appear a Restriction, rather accommodated to the Spirit of the *Jewish* Dispensation, than to the Latitude and Freedom of the Gospel: But this Objection is obviated, when we consider, that in all Things for which no new Rule is given in the New Testament, we are necessarily referred to the Analogy of the Old: In this and in many other Instances, CHRIST came, not to give new Laws, but to fulfil the Laws already given.

A FARTHER Testimony of the Divine Approbation of such a Separation of Holy Places, as we are speaking of, may be gathered from the Declaration of GOD Himself to his Servant *David*: *Whereas it was in thine Heart to build me an House to my Name, THOU DIDST WELL THAT IT WAS IN THINE HEART: Nevertheless thou shalt not build the House; but thy Son that shalt come forth out of thy Loins, he shall build the House unto my Name.* Accordingly, *Solomon* built Him an House, which was the Glory of his Kingdom, and the Wonder of the whole Earth: And in his solemn Dedication of it, when he stood before the Altar in the Presence

*Presence of all the Congregation of Israel, he plainly intimates under what particular Circumstances of Distress Men may, with comfortable Hopes of God's Acceptance, present their Addresses in such holy Places. * If any of the Children of Israel, says he, should, in a Season of Famine, or War, or Pestilence pray and make Supplication in this Place; or if, being carried into Captivity, they should, (as Daniel afterwards did) pray TOWARDS Jerusalem, and the House built for the Name of the most High GOD: In all these Cases, and whatever other might occur, he prays that the Eyes of the LORD might be open in Favor of that House; and His Ears attentive to the Prayers of all who should make Supplication in, or towards it. To this solemn Prayer a most gracious Answer was returned from Heaven: The LORD appeared unto Solomon in a glorious Cloud, and said, I have heard thy Prayer and thy Supplication that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this House which thou hast built, to put*

* See 1 Kings, Chap. viii.

my Name in for ever ; and mine Eyes and mine Heart shall be there perpetually.

IT is true, indeed, that this Promise was conditional ; as are all the Promises of Mercy from GOD to Man : For it is added, *if ye shall turn from following me, ye or your Children, and will not keep my Statutes and Commandments which I have set before you, but go and serve other Gods, and worship them ; then will I cut off Israel out of the Land which I have given them, and this House which I have hallowed for my Name, will I cast out of my Sight ; and at this House which is high, shall every one that passeth by it be astonished, and shall hiss ; and shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this Land, and to this House ? Even because they forsook the LORD their GOD ; therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this Evil.* The calamitous Destruction of Jerusalem and of that stately Temple, too sadly vindicated the Truth and Justice of GOD. “ The City, that had been full of People, sat solitary and forsaken. She that had been Princess among the Nations became tributary : None came to her solemn Feasts :
“ Al

" All her Gates were desolate: Her Priests
 " sighed; her Virgins were afflicted; her Chil-
 " dren were carried into Captivity: The Hea-
 " then entered into her Sanctuary; the LORD
 " cast off his Altar, and abhorred his Temple:
 " He despised, in the Indignation of his An-
 " ger, the King and the Priest."

NEVERTHELESS, as the Sequel of the *Jewish*
 History informs us, GOD, in the Midst of
 Judgment, remembered Mercy: And in His
 own good Time, He stirred up the Spirit of
 the *Persian* King, to proclaim the Restoration
 of the Temple at *Jerusalem*. And whereas
 many of the *Jews* seemed reluctantly to obey this
 Command, and said, " the Time is not come,
 " the Time that the LORD's House should be
 " built;" the Spirit of the LORD encouraged
 two of His Prophets, *Haggai* and *Zechariah*,
 to reprove their cold Neglect, and animate them
 to the glorious Work: Thus saith the LORD of
 Hosts: Consider your Ways: Go up to the Mountains,
 and bring Wood, and build the House; and I will
 take Pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith
 the LORD: Therefore be strong, all ye People of
 C the

the Land; for I am with you, saith the LORD of Hosts. The Glory of this latter House shall be greater than of the former; and in this Place, (mark well the Force of this Expression) IN THIS PLACE will I give PEACE, saith the LORD of Hosts. The Glory of the former Temple consisted in its magnificent Ornaments; its brazen Pillars, its golden Vessels, its exquisite Perfumes: But the Glory of the latter shall far exceed, in being honored with the Presence of the God to whom it is dedicated. In the first Temple, the Things concerning CHRIST JESUS were figuratively represented; in the latter, Himself was really exhibited: So that though the Difference between them in outward Grandeur was such, as to excite a confused Lamentation in those, who remembered the Glory of the former; yet the Presence of *the Prince of Peace* in the latter served to shew, that the highest and best Things of the Law must yield, in Point of Dignity and Worth, to the incomparable Excellencies of the Gospel. It was, in short, “ the spiritual Temple, the Evangelical Church, “ whose Glory should be greater than the
“ *Jewish;*

“ *Jewish*; which should be blessed with the
 “ *Desire of all Nations*, with the Assurance of
 “ Peace.”

WE have now taken a cursory View of the History of Places consecrated to the Service of GOD under the Law; and it appears, from what hath been said, that they were not only *allowed*, but expressly *commanded*: The very Design of *David* to build a Temple was approved by the Most High; and the Execution of that Design by *Solomon*, honored with a visible Testimony of the Divine Acceptance: It remains to be shewn that in the earliest Ages of the Gospel, the Professors of Christianity did not assemble indifferently, in unhallowed Places, for sacred Purposes: On the contrary, we find *St. Paul* sharply reproofing the *Corinthians* for * despising the Church of God, and profaning the Place set apart for the Service of Religion. The Fathers of the three first Centuries particularly insist on the Reverence due to those Places, wherein the Saints assembled, for the

* 1 Cor. xi. 22.

Performance of religious Duties. One of these Houses of Prayer, a Heathen Writer of those Days describes, as richly ornamented with Gold (even amidst all the Disadvantages under which Christianity then labored) and filled with Worshippers, whose Bodies were bowed down to the Earth in all imaginable Humility, and with every Appearance of Devotion. To this let me add one Passage more, extracted from an holy Martyr of the second Century; who exhorts his Disciples in these very significant Terms: " All of you, says he, meet together
 " for Prayer in one Place: Let there be one
 " Form of Prayer common to all; one Mind,
 " and one Hope: Assemble yourselves in perfect Charity, and unfeigned Faith in JESUS
 " CHRIST, than which nothing can be conceived more excellent: All of you, as one
 " Man, repair to the Temple of God, as to
 " one Altar; and present yourselves before the
 " one only High-Priest of God, even JESUS
 " CHRIST." If then, while Religion was depressed and straitened by the Civil Power, there were Places regularly set apart for the Worship
 of

of God, we can have no Doubt of their Establishment, when the Church emerged from her State of Sorrow, Persecution and Distress: Then indeed, the Sanctuary of God was duly honored, and Men delighted to worship the LORD *in the Beauty of Holiness*. His Servants experienced the full Force of the Promise in the Text; and also of that farther Declaration in the Gospel, that *where two or three are gathered together in His Name, there is He in the midst of them*.

THOUGH no Occasion could be more proper than the present, yet I forbear to produce that Variety of Examples, which to many of you must have already occurred, in the sacred History, of the blessed * Effects of a constant Attendance on God's Public Worship: Every serious Christian considers it as his most invaluable Privilege, his highest Honor, his supreme Delight: Even the deluded Worshipper of *Mahomet* thinks it his bounden Duty to pursue a toilsome Journey through burning Deserts, to

* See particularly the Conduct of King *Hezekiah*, 2 Kings, Chap. xix. and of *David*, Psalm lxxiii.

pay his Adoration to a God that cannot profit or deliver him; while the nominal Servant of the LORD JEHOVAH, esteems the Worship of the God of Heaven a Business, which may at any Time, or under any Pretence, how frivolous soever, be dispensed with. Hence it comes to pass, that, in Contempt of all Laws Divine and Human, neither is the Sanctuary revered, nor the Sabbath hallowed, as it ought to be. The stated Times of Public Worship are sacrilegiously mis-spent in Riot and Excess; and these consecrated Walls are either wretchedly deserted, or, at best, but partially frequented *, to the great Hindrance and Dishonor of the Religion which we profess, and to the great Mischief of our own Souls.—But of *you*, my Brethren, I would hope much better Things, though I thus speak :

* Partially indeed : Whether we consider the very great Proportion of our Fellow-Christians who seldom, if ever, attend the Public Service of the Church; or the much greater Proportion of those, who consider the *Evening*-Service of the Sabbath-Day as a Work of Supererogation, if not, indeed, an Act of religious Impertinence.

You,

You, I hope, have learnt duly to estimate the singular Advantages of public Worship; the Loss of which furnished the Psalmist with the bitterest Ingredient in his Cup of Sorrows: *As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after Thee, O GOD: My Soul is athirst for GOD, even for the living GOD: When shall I come to appear before the Presence of GOD? O! send out thy Light and thy Truth, that they may conduct me to thy holy Hill; then will I go unto the Altar of GOD, unto GOD my exceeding Joy; yea, upon the Harp will I praise Thee, O GOD, my GOD **.

LET us adopt these fervent Sentiments of Piety; and let us be thankful to GOD, that the Means of Grace, and the Helps to our Salvation are so numerous, so attainable, and so

* See Psalm xlii. Ver. 1. and Psalm xliii. Ver. 3, 4. On which Passages, so full of the most pathetic Devotion, if the Reader would wish to enlarge his Meditations, or if indeed he would wish to read any of these divine Compositions beautifully illustrated and explained, he will, I am sure, be thankful to me for referring him to a most judicious Commentary on the Book of *Psalms*, for which this Part of the Christian World is much indebted to the very pious and learned President of *Magdalen College, Oxford, Dr. George Horne.*

effectual.

effectual. Let your frequent Attendance here, in future, shew that it was not mere Novelty or Curiosity, but a Sense of Duty, which brought you hither this Day. Flatter not yourselves, that you can pray as acceptably at Home, as in the Church; or that you can *read* as profitably as you can *bear*; it is a Plea which is founded in Error, and will certainly end in Disappointment †. Do not contemptuously turn away from the Wellspring of Life, of whose refreshing Streams ye are not only allowed, but invited to partake. If Arguments of *Love* will not prevail, *be afraid of the Power* and offended Majesty of Him, who hath said, *Them that honor me, I will honor; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.*

THIS, as it is the fittest, is also, I am persuaded, the most acceptable Return that can

† I might here have mentioned the superior Privileges of the Sacerdotal *Absolution* and *Benediction*; neither of which is attainable in the Service of the Closet; but both of which are in the Public Service authoritatively pronounced (not unconditionally, as in the *Romish* Church, but) to “all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe the Gospel of CHRIST.”

be made, for that laudable and generous Zeal which hath been exerted, in Order to erect and finish this very capacious, handsome and commodious Structure. The Piety, Liberality and Industry with which this Work of Faith and Labor of Love hath been prosecuted, demand the warmest Acknowledgements of every Friend to the Service of the Church of *England* in general; and *your* best Thanks in particular; whose immediate Interest is concerned in it, and who may, if it be not your own Fault, reap infinite Advantage from it. None of you can now plead a Want of Space to receive you; here is ample Accommodation for you all.— Neither can you justify your betaking yourselves to any other religious Assemblies than your own; and thereby lessening the Influence of your good Example, where it may be of the greatest Use. The saving Doctrines of Christianity are here diligently inculcated; its great Truths are carefully explained; its wholesome Precepts are strenuously enforced by your own Minister; whose Hands it is your Duty to strengthen by your Concurrence with him, and whose La-

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bors

bors it is your Duty to encourage by your Proficiency under his Ministry. No human Means are now wanting to build you up in the Faith of CHRIST; and in that Holiness of Life, which is the choicest Fruit of it, and indeed the only infallible Token of its Sincerity.

WERE it not that they are least gratified by Praise, who best deserve it, much more might, and indeed ought to be said, in Commendation of those, who, with unremitted Application, have attended to this useful and pious Undertaking, and whose Bounty hath contributed towards its Completion: Without such Diligence and Zeal, the Progress of a Work so highly necessary would have been wretchedly retarded; and without such liberal Contributions, it never would have been perfected at all, in that beautiful Simplicity in which you behold every Thing around you.

Shew then, I say, your Gratitude to those who have imitated the *Patriotism* of the Centurion in the Gospel: He is recorded as having * *loved* the *Jewish* Nation, in that he had built

* Luke vii. 5.

them a Synagogue: Even so, were many of your Benefactors on this Occasion actuated by the purest Motives of Love for your immortal Part, when they thus studiously endeavored to render the Service of GOD not only convenient, but delightful; omitting no Circumstance, which might tend to inspire you with holy Veneration; or which might raise in your Minds the most exalted Ideas of the Majesty of Him, whom ye here assemble to adore. Wait ye therefore constantly upon GOD, in this Place, and He will *come unto you*, and will *blefs you*. But, in order to derive this Blessing on your Acts of Piety, you must keep constantly in View that excellent Precept of *Solomon* in his Book of * *Ecclesiastes*: *Keep thy Foot when thou goest to the House of GOD; lay a due Restraint on thy whole Behaviour; and be more ready to hear, than to offer the Sacrifice of Fools; for they consider not that they do Evil: Be not rash with thy Mouth, and let not thine Heart be hasty to utter any Thing before GOD.* Draw nigh with such

* Chap. v. 1, 2.

Gravity, and Decency and Composure of Mind, as is suitable to the Sacredness of the Place to which you come ; and with such Purity and Seriousness and Attention as the Importance of this Service demands. Remember that GOD is in *Heaven*, and thou upon *Earth* ; and let an awful Sense of this Distance betwixt thee and thy Creator, fill thee with Sentiments of Self-Abasement and most profound Respect.

IN a Word ; if ever you hope for * Peace on Earth, or Glory in the highest Heavens, it must be sought in a regular Observance of the Ordinances of GOD, and a regular Attendance on his Word and Sacraments. I insist the rather on the Necessity of a *regular* Use of these Means of Grace, under the Ministration of him, who must one Day give Account for your Souls, because some Persons, with a Zeal not influenced by Knowledge or Discretion, think they do GOD and themselves more eminent Service, by wandering from Teacher to Teacher,

* Peace, saith an elegant Writer, is a Flower which groweth not in every Soil ; it is only to be found in the Garden of *Sion*, in the Courts of the Temple of the LORD.

to the great Distraction of their own Minds, and to the great Confusion of the Church of GOD. Rather abide quietly within your proper Sphere of Duty; and be assured, that if sufficient Means of Salvation are not to be met with in the Ordinances of your own Church, in vain will ye seek for them in any other Assembly of Christians whatsoever: Let the Light of your good Example shine before those, whose Conduct will be more immediately affected by it; that GOD may be glorified, the Interests of his spiritual Kingdom may be advanced, and your own and others eternal Welfare may be promoted. And may the Prayers, which shall ever hereafter be offered in this Place, find a gracious Acceptance before the Throne of GOD! May no Doctrine ever be here delivered, which is not according to *Truth* and *Soberness*; but may the Word of GOD, faithfully dispensed, be to all who shall attentively hear it, *the Savor of Life unto Life*! And may the Sacraments which shall here be duly administered, become Instruments of Regeneration
and

and Growth in Grace, and effectual to the Salvation of every worthy Receiver !

Now to GOD the Father, GOD the Son, and GOD the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

F I N I S.